



Mill River Unified Union School District

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Chairman Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW,
Washington, DC 20554
October XX, 2017

Dear Chairman Pai,

I am writing today in response to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Public Notice which, among other things, considers changes to the E-Rate program. First, I want to thank the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program and for the critical programmatic and policy changes the commission adopted in 2014. The E-Rate program provides critical discounts to assist schools (like mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

We live and work in a rural area of Vermont, and funding has been essential in modernizing our buildings and providing adequate access. Unfortunately, we will always be facing the task of staying modern, as technology changes and what is deemed as an acceptable speed continues to increase. If we lose E-Rate funding, we will struggle to maintain our programs without a heavy burden on our taxpayers, who are already burdened in a rural state.

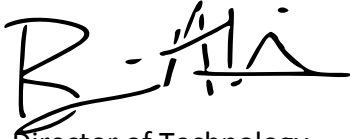
The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this public notice, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works. Any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential and ensuring the FCC remains a good steward of the changes adopted 2014, allowing those changes to progress and play out as intended.

E-Rate played a critical role in the rapid and significant expansion of connectivity in schools, and the 2014 modernization was a much needed update to ensure more schools and libraries are connected to broadband. The E-Rate's investment in Category 2 Wi-Fi and internal connections funding is extremely valuable and could not be replaced by school, district or state funds.

We will absolutely exhaust our Category 2 funding by 2020, and we still have several large projects that will be necessary in the years after that. As we've expanded our Wi-Fi capabilities to meet the demands of a locally funded one-to-one program, we've watched other parts of our infrastructure age. In order to maintain an education experience that benefits our students, we will need this funding. In a rural area, we are forced to seek opportunities online to help our students connect to experiences and experts that we do not have the luxury of having locally.

In closing, I reiterate my district's continued, strong support for and reliance upon the E-Rate program for being able to access and afford the high-speed connectivity that is so central to our students' learning. Thank you for considering these comments.

Brian A. Hill

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Hill', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Director of Technology

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